

Fort Des Moines Historic Complex,
Buildings 65 and 66
(Double Barracks)
Des Moines
Polk County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-121-K

HABS
IOWA,
77-DESMO,
24-K-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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Building Nos. 65-66. Double Barracks

This two-story building stood on the west end of the line of barracks fronting on Gruber Street and the south side of the parade ground. Virtually identical in all respects to the other structures, it, too, followed plan 75G for a two company barrack building as filed in the office of the Quartermaster General. This structure cost \$54,640.45 on its completion on February 8, 1905. Erected of brick on a stone foundation, the 200-man-capacity double barracks had a slate roof. The brick walls were in running bond joined with red-pigmented mortar.

The building comprised a main section, 71 feet 8 inches by 39 feet 4 inches, and two wings, each 39 feet 4 inches wide by 103 feet 4 inches long. The ends of the main building connected with either wing, and along the front of the entire structure stood a two-tiered porch with turned columns supporting the upper level and the porch roof. Metal guard railings ran between the columns. Near either end of the main building on the lower level and closely adjacent to the wings was a paneled double doorway with transom. Steps with guard railings stood opposite each doorway and led from the first level of the porch to grade level.

The front of the main building had six double hung windows at each level. Each window had four lights. At the rear of the main building another two-tiered porch was attached. The rear wall of the building likewise contained six double hung windows, plus two doorways on the upper level and four on the lower level. A roofed, single-tier porch was attached to the rear of each wing.

The outer side of each wing had nine double hung windows spaced along the upper level and eight along the lower level. A door leading to the basement stood towards the rear of the lower level, and there were

five basement windows and two coal chutes at ground level. The courtyard side of each wing had five double hung windows at the upper level and five on the lower, together with five basement windows at ground level. All windows had segmental arches and limestone lug sills. The ridged roof of the main building contained six chimneys, all corbeled, while the gabled roofs of the wings sported one chimney and two ventilators each. On the gable in front were two six-light double hung palladian style attic windows. Beneath the rear gable of each wing were two four-light double hung windows. A firewall divided the buildings.

Each barracks was layed out as follows:

Basement:

Cellar, 23' 3" x 36'
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Hall, 11' 6" x 36'
Lavatory, 32' 8" x 34' 6"
Boiler room, 32' 8" x 34' 6"

First floor:

Mess room, 36' 4" x 33' 1"
Dormitory, 36' 8" x 33' 6"
Hall and Vestibule, 11' 7" x 36' 2"
Sergeant's room, 11' 7" x 16' 1"
Store room, 11' 3" x 8' 4"
Tailor shop, 11' 3" x 11' 7"
Company office, 11' 7" x 19' 9"
NCO room, 11' 3" x 15' 1"
Cook's room, 11' 7" x 10' 6"
Pantry, 11' 7" x 10' 7"
Kitchen, 36' 4" x 21' 1" (+11' 10" x 11' 6")

Second floor:

Dormitory, 100' 4" x 36' 4"
Hall, 11' 4" x 16' 1"
Barber shop, 11' 4" x 16' 1"
NCO room, 11' 4" x 16' 1"
Day room, 35' 6" x 19' 6"

When Fort Des Moines served as General Hospital No. 26, 1918-19, Building Nos. 65-66 were designated Wards Nos. 2 and 1, respectively. the interior of the structure, like the other barracks, had plaster walls and wood floors. Ceiling girders were supported throughout by intervally spaced steel pipe columns. The building was equipped with steam radiator heating and electric lighting. In 1919, Ward No. 1 (Building No. 66) was remodeled for use as a woodworking and machine shop by the re-educational division. The shops were on the lower level; the upper level became used for academic classrooms, necessitating the addition of sufficient partitions to make twelve classrooms, each 18 feet by 16 feet. The rest of the ward was used for divisional offices. A number of unspecified repairs occurred between 1905 and 1922, costing an approximate average of \$183.00 per year. Toilet facilities included 12 water closets, 8 urinals, 6 wash sinks, 4 showers, and 6 laundry tubs. Plumbing changes in 1927-28 consisted of replacing hot water heaters and installing flush valves. In 1930 flexatile composition flooring was laid in each half at an expenditure of \$542.40, and one year later the fire walls were extended, insulation placed around the chimneys, and attic wiring replaced. In 1935 a Perfex unit heater was installed, and in 1938 two coal ranges were placed in Building Nos. 65-66.

In 1987 Building Nos. 65-66 were occupied by the Iowa Department of Human Services as a state correctional facility. The interior has been refurbished to accommodate its present function. The exterior has also received repairs and modifications. On the north side new porch columns and railings have been added. Brick repairs indicate the conversion of former doors to windows on the wings and the closure of other entrances. Casement windows of 1-over-1 light have been added at the basement level. On the east side, the second window from the front on the upper level has been converted to a door to use the fire escape added on the side. This alteration and addition is repeated on the west side. Three windows have been converted into doors on the west side. All original porches on the double barracks, except the two-tiered porch at the rear of the main section, have been removed. The remaining porch has had

the balusters replaced in the railings. Another fire escape is on the rear of the east, while on the rear of the west wing a window has been bricked up and a ventilator installed. The slate roof has been replaced by one of asphalt shingles. Overall condition of the structure is excellent.(25)

25. Card for Building Nos. 65-66. "Historical Record of Buildings." NA, RG 77, Box 51; Plan, "Two Co. Barrack," No. 75G, April, 1902. 9 sheets. NA, RG 77. Cartographic Archives Division; "War Diary of U.S. General Hospital No. 26, Fort Des Moines, Iowa." Entry fo January 3, 1919. NA, RG 39. World War I Organizational Records. Medical Department. General Hospital No. 26, Box No. 1066; Field survey notes, February 20-22, 1987.